

The “Call to Poets” invites reflection on America’s founding ideals in the Declaration of Independence while addressing the continuing pursuit of justice, equity, and inclusion for all. For your reference, here are a few recommended resources:

Concord’s Historic Background For 10,000 years, before Europeans came to American, the Nipmuc and Massachusett peoples lived in this area in a flourishing area of settlement they called Musketaquid, meaning “land among grassy river.”

Concord was incorporated as the first inland settlement in Massachusetts dated September 12, 1635 and is regarded as the birthplace of the nation, as it’s where the first battle of the American Revolutionary War (War for Independence) on April 19, 1775 was fought and where the “shot heard ‘round the world” for liberty and self-government was fired.

During that battle, between twenty and forty colonists were of African descent or Indigenous people and were the first of many people of color to take up arms between 1775 and 1783. By the end of the war, an estimated 5,500 African and Indigenous men served on the colonial side. Regrettably, systemic racism and historical bias have erased or buried many records of Black and Indigenous people who had a prominent role in the founding of the United States.

For a more detailed history of Concord and the surrounding area, see

<https://visitconcord.org/about/>

When Thomas Jefferson Penned All Men Are Created Equal... While the Declaration of Independence (1776) proclaimed that “all men are created equal,” Stanford historian Jack Rakove notes that this phrase was originally intended to assert the collective right of the American colonies to self-governance, rather than individual equality. Over time, however, Americans have reinterpreted the Declaration as a broader commitment to civil rights, shaping movements for inclusion and justice.

<https://news.stanford.edu/stories/2020/07/meaning-declaration-independence-changed-time>

Howard University Law Library’s Civil Rights History Portal

Howard University Law Library’s Civil Rights History portal provides insight into the historical and legal battles of various marginalized groups, including Black Americans, women, LGBTQIA+ individuals, people with disabilities, immigrants, and Indigenous communities. Each group’s struggle for civil rights has shaped modern America, demonstrating that the pursuit of equality is an ongoing effort that requires constant engagement, reflection, and action.

<https://library.law.howard.edu/civilrightshistory/indigenous>